

Short Term Detail to Guatemala

For a

Civil Engineer, Access Specialist or Transportation Specialist

OPPORTUNITY: The U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI) International Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) is seeking an expert to provide technical assistance in Guatemala. Spanish fluency is desirable.

BACKGROUND: ITAP provides assistance to other countries on subjects of Departmental expertise, on a reimbursable basis. The program is currently operating in seventeen countries with support from organizations such as the U.S. Agency for International Development, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Mirador-Rio Azul National Park, in the Petén region of northern Guatemala, was established by Guatemala in 1990 as a core zone within the Mayan Biosphere Reserve to protect its significant biological and cultural resources. ITAP is providing technical assistance to strengthen the management and protection of this park and increase opportunities for sustainable tourism. ITAP is to help improve the administration of Mirador-Rio Azul National Park, ensure that surrounding communities derive economic benefits from the park and design its assistance programs so they can be applied to other protected areas and communities in Guatemala.

Currently, Guatemala's most popular tourist attraction is the Classic Maya ruin in Tikal National Park, located 50 kilometers south of Mirador-Rio Azul National Park, which receives 200,000 visitors each year. Guatemala wants to expand tourism to the Petén to entice tourists to extend their stay in the region by adding other sites of interest to the most common one-day tour of Tikal.

The Preclassic Maya ruins of El Mirador and Nakbe, both located in the park, are two of several sites in the region with an enormous potential for attracting tourists and, thus, generating greater opportunities for economic development. El Mirador potentially could draw far more visitors than Tikal due to its significantly greater size and antiquity. El Mirador contains the two largest structures in the Maya world including the Danta pyramid, which is believed to be the largest structure ever built anywhere in the ancient world. In fact, the footprint of La Danta is larger than the entire central acropolis of Tikal.

At present, there is no road into the park and the park offers essentially no visitor infrastructure or service. To visit the park, visitors either must travel by helicopter or walk 60 kilometers along unimproved trails. Nonetheless, visitation to El Mirador is increasing due to the National Geographic Society program *Dawn of the Maya* and other documentaries. Tourism to the Park, if properly developed, could significantly augment

the economies of “gateway” communities that surround the park as well as the Guatemalan economy. With these benefits in mind, Guatemala asked ITAP to help it address the management needs for Mirador-Rio Azul National Park.

The Government of Guatemala would like to improve visitor access to the park. Alternatives include hiking trails (usually with pack mules), heliports, airplane landing strips, bicycle trails, roads and a narrow-gage railroad (zoo train). These facilities could be improved or unimproved, and could occur in combination. Each alternative would have positive and negative effects on visitation levels, regional natural and cultural resources, and regional economic development.

ASSIGNMENT: ITAP is looking for a specialist who could evaluate each of these alternatives in terms of their potential impacts to park development, the management of regional natural and cultural resources and local and regional economies, and their relative feasibilities, complexities and costs. Basically, the specialist would be able to provide sufficient documentation to the Government of Guatemala so that officials could make a fully-informed decision on how the park would be accessed.

SCHEDULE: The selected specialist would make one or two, 2-week trips to Guatemala during 2007, and provide about 2 additional weeks of work at their home office. So as to avoid conflicts with their normal workloads, the specialist would be allowed great flexibility in scheduling their time and travel.

PRE- AND POST-TRIP DUTIES: All travel and in-country logistics will be handled by ITAP. Background material will be provided to the selected individual prior to departure. The selected individual will be expected to work in collaboration with the ITAP manager, team colleagues and in-country counterparts both before and after travel to the region. The selected individual will communicate both over the phone and through e-mail on the preparation and follow-up for the technical assistance.

Within 3 weeks of the completion of the trip, the specialist will provide the ITAP manager a brief draft report of the trip events, evaluations made, and recommendations for future related training and technical assistance.

COSTS: ITAP will cover all travel costs associated with this assignment (round-trip airfare, lodging, meals, immunizations, etc.). **The salary of the specialist, however, must be paid by their employing agency for the duration of the international assignment, including pre- and post-trip obligations.**

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Persons wishing to be considered for this assignment:

- Must have demonstrated experience in the specialty detailed above;

- Must be willing to live and work in extremely remote locations with extremely “rustic” conditions during this assignment, including multiple-day hikes;
- Must follow required procedures to protect against diseases, insects and poisonous snakes and;
- Must have demonstrated ability to work with and adapt to the needs and abilities of agencies and professionals of different ethnic or cultural groups.

Highly desirable qualifications include:

- Previous international experience, particularly experience with protected area systems in other countries;
- Previous experience with indigenous cultures; and
- Spanish language proficiency.

Upon selection, the candidate must submit a current physician-signed letter or medical review form indicating fitness for duty.

Before applying for this detail, the applicant must obtain supervisory approval for their participation in this program.

HOW TO APPLY

Persons interested in being considered for this international assignment should send a resume and/or letter of interest detailing relevant work experience. **Specifically highlight the technical specialty requested in this recruitment that you possess.**

Please ensure that you include with your application materials the following administrative information; home and work address, phone/fax numbers, supervisor name and contact details (phone number and e-mail), whether you have a valid personal and/or official passport, date of birth, and grade/step. Please refer to the DOI-ITAP website, <http://www.doi.gov/intl/itap/> for additional information about our program, other short-term opportunity announcements, and our travel guidelines.

Submit applications (electronically is preferred) to:

Cynthia Perera,
U.S. Department of the Interior, International Affairs
1849 C Street, NW, Room 4444,
Washington, DC 20240
Tel: 202-219-0537, Fax: 202-501-6381
Email: cynthia_perera@ios.doi.gov

Also, please submit a copy to Eric Greenquist (tel. 541-683-6114, e-mail eric_greenquist@or.blm.gov). **Any questions that you have regarding this assignment can be directed to Mr. Greenquist.**

Applications will be reviewed as received on a rolling-basis. Positions will be filled as soon as a suitable candidate is selected. Applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

All NPS applicants should copy their applications to Rudy D'Alessandro in the NPS Office of International Affairs: email rudy_dalessandro@nps.gov or fax 202-371-1446.

Selection Process

A short list of candidates will be interviewed by telephone. The entire selection process may take a few months. All candidates will be notified of the results of the selection process, notification may be by telephone, email or letter.